

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, SCUL, AS, NZ, UNESCO

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN UNESCO REGIONAL MEETING

REF: A) PARIS 19224 B) CANBERRA 3526

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN HESITATION OVER PRESSING FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN FORTHCOMING JAKARTA REGIONAL MEETING OF UNESCO IS NOT PRIMARILY RELATED TO UNESCO AS SUCH. RATHER, IT IS PART OF AUSTRALIAN CONCERN AS TO HOW TO ENSURE IT IS REGARDED AS PART OF SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SO IS INCLUDED IN REGIONAL BODIES GENERALLY. GOA IS CONCERNED TO AVOID REJECTION OF MEMBERSHIP IN UNESCO REGIONAL BODY, NOT ON ITS MERITS, BUT BECAUSE OF DAMAGE SUCH REJECTION COULD HAVE ON POTENTIAL AUSTRALIAN MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL BODIES. END SUMMARY.

2. REF SUGGEST THAT CAUTIOUS AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TOWARDS AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL MEETING OF UNESCO IN JAKARTA (REF B) REFLECTS ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDE OF MEMBER OF AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION TO UNESCO IN PARIS. WE DOUBT THIS IS THE CASE. VIEWS REPORTED IN REF B WERE COMMUNICATED TO EMBASSY BY DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ARE FULLY CONSISTENT WITH VIEWS OF DFA ON AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL

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PAGE 02 CANBER 03910 160118Z

MEETINGS. THESE VIEWS HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH

ANY UNESCO PROBLEM AS SUCH BUT DIRECTLY AFFECT
AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS WITH ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS.

3. BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA IN WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS PARTICIPATED
(SEATO, ASPAC) HAVE HAD STUNTED GROWTH AND NOW HAVE
UNCERTAIN FUTURE. AUSTRALIA WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE
IN PERIODIC MEETINGS OF SEAMED (SOUTHEAST ASIAN MINISTERS
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT) BUT HAS NOT YET BEEN INVITED
TO DO SO. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM HAS SUGGESTED ESTABLISH-
MENT OF A NEW REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR EAST ASIA, BUT
FORM AND DETAILS ARE VAGUE, APART FROM HIS EVIDENT
WISH THAT AUSTRALIA BE SEEN AS APRT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
AND JOINT IN ANY SUCH ORGANIZATION TO BE ESTABLISHED.
AS REF B NOTES, AUSTRALIA'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN NEIGHBORS
HAVE BEEN HESITANT ABOUT SEEING AUSTRALIA IN A REGIONAL
ORGANIZATION, IN VIEW ITS PREDOMINANTLY WHITE AND
EUROPEAN BACKGROUND.

4. PROSPECT OF AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN ASIAN REGIONAL
MEETING OF UNESCO IN JAKARTA SHOULD BE SEEN AGAINST THIS
BACKGROUND. AUSTRALIANS SEE NEED TO MAKE HASTE SLOWLY
IN VIEW OF PROBLEMS THEY HAVE ALREADY ENCOUNTERED. BY
SAME TOKEN, IF AUSTRALIA IS EVENTUALLY ADMITTED TO ASIAN

REGIONAL MEETINGS OF UNESCO AS FULL MEMBER, AUSTRALIA
MAY COME SLOWLY TO BE ACCEPTED AS ELIGIBLE FOR OTHER
REGIONAL MEETINGS ON OTHER MATTERS. EMBASSY BELIEVES
THEREFORE THAT IT IS THIS CONSIDERATION THAT UNDERLIES
GOVERNMENT VIEW OF HOW BEST TO MAXIMIZE ITS PARTICI-
PATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL BODIES.

5. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AUSTRALIANS WOULD
BE HAPPY TO BECOME FULL MEMBER OF UNESCO REGIONAL BODY
IN TIME FOR JAKARTA MEETING, IF SOMEONE ELSE ARRANGES
IT. WHAT AUSTRALIA CLEARLY DOES NOT RPT NOT WANT IS
REJECTION OF ITS MEMBERSHIP IN UNESCO REGIONAL BODY,
AS THIS MIGHT FURTHER DAMAGE ITS PROPSECTS FOR MEMBER-
SHIP IN OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGIONAL BODIES. IT IS
PROBABLY TRUE THAT, IF NEW ZEALAND TAKES LEAD IN EFFORT
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TO ARRANGE FULL MEMBERSHIP IN JAKARTA MEETING, AUSTRALIA
WILL BE FORCED TO JOIN IN ATTEMPT. AS REF B MAKES CLEAR,
EMBASSY HAS ALREADY RAISED MATTER WITH DFA, WITH RESULTS
REPORTED. NEXT STEP MIGHT BEST BE LEFT TO NEW ZEALAND.
GREEN

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